

REMARKS

The Office Action dated May 26, 2009 has been reviewed and considered and the application has been amended in response to the Action. The application is believed to have been placed in condition for allowance.

In the Action, the Examiner acknowledged the election of Invention Group I, claims 1-12 and 15-29 and noted the withdrawal of non-elected claims 13-14. The Examiner objected to informalities in the specification and required the re-submission of the changes to be made on page 16 of the specification. The Examiner objected to informalities in claims 2, 15 and 19 and required correction. Substantively, the Examiner rejected claims 1-12 and 15-29 under 35 USC § 103(a) as being obvious over Clairadin et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,209,163) in view of Japan 2002-090576. The Examiner also acknowledged receipt of the priority documents and returned initialed copies of Forms PTO/SB/08a and PTO/SB/08b indicating consideration of the references submitted in the Information Disclosure Statements.

The objections to informalities in the specification and the prior changes to page 16 of the specification have been addressed and overcome. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the objections are respectfully requested.

With respect to the objections of claims 2, 15 and 19, the claims have been amended as follows:

Claim 2: “the respective predetermined directions through the respective predetermined angles” is changed to --respective predetermined directions through respective predetermined angles--.

Claim 15: “the side surfaces and end section” is changed to --side surfaces and an end section-- and “the outside of” is deleted.

Claim 19: “extension A of” is changed to --extension of-- and “the cleaning tape” (line 6) is changed to --a cleaning tape--.

Claims 19-29: “bar-like member” is amended to read --inner guide member--.

Additionally, in claim 10, “the delivery means is rotated to the first angle in a third direction” is amended to read --the delivery means is rotated in response to the rotation of the winding means--.

Finally, the preambles of claims 15 and 19 are amended to recite --An optical fiber connector cleaner.--

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the objections to the claims are respectfully requested.

Applicants respectfully traverse the obviousness rejections under 35 USC § 103(a), as follows:

U.S. Patent No. 6,209,163 relates to a cleaner for cleaning a fiber optic connector including an advancing mechanism for advancing a cleaning medium. When ratcheting handle 60 of the cleaner is operated, supply reel 36 and take-up reel 38 are rotated, and thereby cleaning tape 70 is moved.

JP 2002-090576 relates to a cleaner for cleaning a end face of an optical connector ferrule including a rotating means for driving a take-up bobbin to take up a thread for cleaning.

With respect to claim 1, the Examiner asserts that U.S. Patent No. 6,209,163 discloses all the recited subject matter with the exception of the “cleaning rotating means coaxially connected to the cleaning section in the housing and rotatably supported with respect to the housing.” The Examiner asserts that JP 2002-090576 discloses the “cleaning section rotating means,” and thus it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to have substituted the rotating means of JP 2002-090576 for the drive means of U.S. Patent No. 6,209,163 in order to improve the cleaner. However, this assertion is incorrect.

First, JP 2002-0905 fails to disclose the “cleaning section rotating means” of the present invention. The Examiner states that JP 2002-0905 discloses “a cleaning section rotating means 32, 35a, 35b (Fig. 7),” but numeral 32 of JP 2002-0905 denotes a nozzle attached to a rotation shaft 31 protruding outside a case, a pin 33 is only protruding from the tip of the nozzle 32. As shown in Fig. 7, the nozzle 32 is not coaxially connected to the pin 33, and JP 2002-0905 does not describe that the nozzle 32 is rotatably supported with respect to the case, and thus it is readily evident that the nozzle 32 is not the “cleaning section rotating means.” Also, numerals 35a, 35b of JP 2002-0905 each denote a narrow slit formed in the rotation shaft 31 for guiding a thread for cleaning 13 into a gap between the nozzle 32 and the pin 33, and thus the slits 35a and 35b are not the “cleaning section rotating means.” Applicants respectfully assert that the Examiner, in modifying this reference for the purpose of combining it, is effectively destroying the reference for its intended purpose.

Second, U.S. Patent No. 6,209,163 fails to disclose the “transmission means” of the present invention. The Examiner states that U.S. Patent No. 6,209,163 discloses all the recited subject matter with the exception of the “cleaning section rotating means,” but it is apparent that the U.S. Patent No. 6,209,163 does not disclose “transmission means which rotates the winding means and the cleaning section rotating means substantially simultaneously in a predetermined direction through a predetermined angle and then reverses the cleaning section rotating means to its original position” if it does not disclose the “cleaning section rotating means.”

Therefore, since both applied references fail to disclose the “cleaning section rotating means” and the “transmission means,” the invention of claim 1 is not obvious over the combination of these applied references.

With respect to claims 2 and 15, the Examiner rejected the claims for the same reason, and thus the same argument as above applies to those rejections.

With respect to claim 19, the same argument can also be generally applied to the rejection. The Examiner states that U.S. Patent No. 6,209,163 discloses "a cleaning section rotating means 50,62,64," but the gear 50, the toothed ratchet wheel 62 and the moving pawl 64 of U.S. Patent No. 6,209,163 are for rotating the supply reel 36 and the take-up reel 38, not for rotating the elongated mating nose 28 allegedly corresponding to the "cleaning section" of the present invention.

The dependent claims are patentable at least for the same reasons as stated above.

In summary, in order to make the purported combination of the two applied references, the Examiner must destroy the references for their intended purposes.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the § 103(a) prior art rejections are respectfully requested.

As all grounds of objection and rejection have been addressed and overcome, entry of this Amendment and issuance of a Notice of Allowance of the claims, as now presented, are respectfully solicited.

In the event that there are any questions relating to this Amendment or to the application in general, it would be appreciated if the Examiner would telephone the undersigned attorney concerning such questions so that the prosecution of this application may be expedited.

Please charge any shortage or credit any overpayment of fees to BLANK ROME LLP, Deposit Account No. 23-2185 (117386.0107). In the event that a petition for an extension of time is required to be submitted herewith and in the event that a separate petition does not accompany this response, Applicants hereby petition under 37 C.F.R. 1.136(a) for an extension of time for as many months as are required to render this submission timely.

Any fees due are authorized above.

Dated: August 25, 2009

Respectfully submitted,

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